

# TALKING WITH YOUR LANDLORD:

## COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR BUILDING RAPPORT

There are many landowners looking for young, innovative farmers who are promoting a sound conservation ethic as they look at the future care of their land. Gaining conservation, communication and financial skills will help Emerging Farmers stand out in the community and create a competitive advantage for building relationships with future landlords. This publication series lays the initial roadmap to help develop those skills and provide resources for continued growth.



**Building rapport with landowners, as well as agricultural business representatives, bankers, tax consultants and others within the community, is key to creating a strong network of experienced mentors that can help you succeed. Building relationships based on trust and a sense that you understand each other's concerns leads to more effective and beneficial interactions.**

### TIPS TO BUILD RAPPORT:



#### **Pay attention to appearance.**

Folks will judge you by how you look before you even say a word. Look clean, prepared, and groomed. Your appearance should help you look confident and competent.



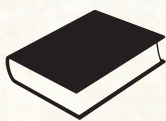
#### **Use sincere compliments.**

Comment on something that stands out, that speaks to something they are doing well on the land or in the community. This shows that you are genuinely interested in them and their land or business.



#### **Follow through.**

When you commit to doing something, do so in a timely manner. If you agreed to mow the driveway and homestead (even if it is not written in the lease), it is important to be 100% accountable and complete the task. If you are unable to complete the commitment by the agreed upon time, clearly communicate when and how you will work to meet the commitment.



#### **Tell short personal stories.**

It shouldn't be a major digression or go on too long, but in a sentence or two, share a personal anecdote that reveals something about you as a human being. People like other people who are relatable!



#### **Ask insightful questions.**

Questions go even further than compliments if they are sincerely asked, demonstrating that you are truly thinking about the issue of inquiry.



# RIGHT COMMUNICATION CHANNEL FOR THE RIGHT SITUATION

We are more connected than ever, but in some ways that also makes it easier to miscommunicate. As you work to build relationships, determining the appropriate communication channel can help improve efficiency of decisions and reduce issues and frustrations. With the goal of effective communication in mind, you may be pushed outside your comfort zone to use other forms of communication. It is important to choose which channel (face-to-face, phone, text, email or print) fits the needs of the situation and the others in the conversation.

Here are a set of sample questions to consider when communicating with your landlord, agricultural business representatives, and financial advisors/lenders as you establish your relationships.

- How often should we meet face-to-face to check in, provide updates and ask questions?**
- Would you like updates via text during the crop and/or livestock season to let you know how things are looking?**
- Do you prefer to be reached by phone or email if I have questions?**



It is highly recommended that you get your lease terms in writing and both the landlord and tenant are provided a copy for their records.



## ON THE DEFENSIVE

As you build rapport with others, be aware of clues that indicate they may be feeling defensive, or may have misinterpreted what you've said:

- Body language such as crossing their arms, rolling their eyes, frowning their brows, looking down or away from you, not smiling at your jokes, shaking their heads
- Curt or minimal answers to questions
- Sarcastic tone of voice

## PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

It takes practice and determination to develop effective communication skills. Consider getting involved with local, state and national organizations to help develop and strengthen your communication and leadership skills. Your participation will aid in the development of additional support networks, while strengthening your local community.



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